

Hobbies

Comiskey Park medallion's a keepsake, not an investment

By Roger Boye

Today's column answers more questions from Chicago Tribune readers.

Q—Several weeks ago I paid \$35 for a one-ounce silver medallion marking the final year of baseball in Comiskey Park. Do you think the item has investment potential? The metal is .999 fine silver.

B. M., South Holland

A—In general, 10 "new issues" go down in price as they are traded on the secondary market for every one that goes up. The initial public offering usually satiates collector demand for years to come, and prices drop as persons wishing to sell their keepsakes try to attract new buyers.

The White Sox may win the World Series before you manage to sell your medal for more than \$35 (at present, one ounce of silver is worth about \$5). Prize it as a souvenir of a great ballpark, not as a way to make money.

Q—I received a blue 1986 Lincoln cent in change. Have I struck it lucky?

T. Y., Schaumburg

A—No. Most likely, someone doctored it by coating it with ink or other material, or treating it with a chemical. Such altered coins make collectors turn blue.

Q—I was terribly disappointed when I tried to sell my late husband's Indian-head penny collection. A suburban dealer offered to pay me (an average of) 50

cents a coin and a Chicago dealer, 35 cents each. The dates range from 1887 to 1907. How can coins nearly a century or more old be worth so little?

H. J., Chicago

A—In many of the years between 1859 and 1909, Uncle Sam made large quantities of Indian-head cents. Although such coins have long since disappeared from circulation, most types are fairly common among collectors.

Some dealers will pay from 25 to 50 cents each for "good condition" Indian heads minted between 1890 and 1908. Most of the earlier dates and "S"-mint Indians from 1908 and 1909 command higher "buy prices." Supply, demand and condition

determine a coin's value, not age.

Q—I have several \$5 bills of series 1963 with red serial numbers and Treasury seal. Are these "United States notes" special?

W. G., Berwyn

A—Dealers might sell a crisp, uncirculated specimen of the bill you describe for about \$10 and a

slightly worn specimen for perhaps \$6. However, you'd be hard pressed to find a dealer willing to pay you more than \$5 each for the bills—even if they are uncirculated—because series 1963 notes are too new to command much of a premium on the wholesale market.